

September 12, 2013

PRESENT: Richard Nichols, Chairman
Michael Pierce, Vice-Chairman
Philip Bean, Selectman
Mary-Louise Woolsey, Selectman
Michael Plouffe, Selectman
Frederick Welch, Town Manager
Michael Schwotzer, Finance Director

SALUTE TO THE FLAG

I. Public Comment Period

II. Announcements and Community Calendar (4:56)

Chairman Nichols announced that tonight's meeting is a special meeting to go over the General Government section of the budget. There are a few items to take care of first.

The first item is a request for approval of solicitation permit and use of Town property in Marelli's Square by the James House. Mr. Welch made comments as follows: raffle permits to raise funds for James House; Chief Sullivan has looked over the raffle permits; Recreation has reviewed the request for use of Town property.

Selectman Woolsey MOTIONED to approve the solicitation permit and use of Town property by the James House SECONDED by Selectman Plouffe.

VOTE: 5-0-0

The second item discussed was the memo from Mr. Schwotzer in regards to adjustments made to the budget at Monday night's meeting. Mr. Schwotzer went through the changes made by the Board on Monday that included the new Fire Department position.

III. Budget Reviews

1. General Government

a. Budget Committee (7:24)

Mr. Schwotzer explained it is basically a flat budget and went through the parts of this budget.

b. Trustees of the Trust Funds (8:06)

Mr. Schwotzer commented that this budget is the same as this year and discussed the items that make up this budget.

Selectman Woolsey commented that under the law the Trustees of the Trust Fund can spend any amount they see necessary.

c. Heritage Commission (8:50)

Mr. Schwotzer commented that this is another flat budget and whatever they do not spend will be transferred to the Treasurer to be put into their account.

Selectman Woolsey asked about which buildings will be sprayed. Selectman Pierce had Mr. Schwotzer explain in detail what happens to money that this commission does not spend.

d. Tax Collection (11:03)

Mrs. Bennett commented as follows: budget pretty much the same; wage increase for the Deputy that is contractual; estimated salary for one part-time clerk.

e. Cemeteries (12:02)

Mr. Kenney and Mr. Harrington of the Cemetery Trustees present and made comments as follows: 1996 Chevrolet pickup is finished; barely running now; put together a warrant article; wondering if this truck should be put in budget, warrant article or withdrawn from Cemetery Burial Fund; explained the real need for the truck; discussed how the new truck will be easier for the employees to use.

Chairman Nichols feels that the money for the truck should not be put in the budget and explained why. He would go with one of the other options. Selectman Pierce suggested that they follow the purchasing policy, get the proper bids and not have a repeat of the last purchase.

Selectman Woolsey asked for an update on the trees which Mr. Kenney provided for the Board.

Chairman Nichols asked about the regular wage increase and explained how the Board agreed on Monday night that wage increases would not exceed 1%.

Chairman Nichols MOTIONED to change the regular wage increase to 1% over the 2013 level budgeted to \$43,172 SECONDED by Selectman Pierce.

VOTE: 5-0-0

Mr. Schwotzer explained that this change will ripple through other lines in the Budget.

f. Mosquito Control (24:27)

Mr. Schwotzer made comments as follows: spoke with Chairman; multi-year contract so there is not a change for contracted services.

g. Library (26:41)

Mrs. Reynolds-Cooper made comments as follows: this last July was their busiest yet; summer reading program was wonderful; lost a fulltime employee and replaced with part-time employees; will be losing their custodian/maintenance man, which is a contractual position.

Chairman Nichols made comments as follows: noticed the switch between fulltime and part-time employees; spoke about the changes made last year by the Town for the health insurance for union and non-union employees last year; would like to know what the Library

had done over the past year in regards to making the same change for their employees. Mrs. Reynolds-Cooper stated that the Trustees have reviewed the union contracts and Library employees' salaries and benefits and have agreed to leave the medical insurance where it is at with the 90/10 split. Chairman Nichols pointed out that the Library employees are receiving a health insurance benefit/cost different than everyone else in Town.

Selectman Pierce made comments as follows: has a problem with this; thinks that all municipal employees should be treated the same; have to watch out for the taxpayer's in Hampton.

Selectman Bean asked the Chairman to explain the other health plans and contribution amounts for employees and employer; the employer contribution 90 or 85 percent. They also discussed the 10.77 percent the Town pays for retirees of group one; different from police and fire employees.

Chairman Nichols expressed a concern of the inequity and fairness to other employees, it is a philosophical difference.

Mrs. Reynolds-Cooper feels that this is an invalid point since Library employees are not Town employees and shared the number of court cases that prove this.

Selectman Woolsey made comments as follows: Library employees are non-contractual employees; Trustees are independent elected officials; therefore it is up to the public to decide who should serve; not inclined to pressure for continuity and compliance for individuals who serve under independent trustees; wonders what amount their life insurance policy is, it is correlated to their salary.

Selectman Pierce reminded everyone that they are all responsible for looking out for the best interest of the taxpayer.

h. Conservation Commission (40:10)

Mr. Diener made comments as follows: budget pretty much the same; one change is a wage increase for their Conservation Coordinator; wage increase was voted on by their commission in early summer; has been with the Commission since 2009, this is the first raise since 2009 when she started; explained what the Conservation Coordinator does.

Selectman Woolsey thanked both Mr. Diener and Mrs. Dionne for the time they put in.

Chairman Nichols echoes what Selectman Woolsey said about the great job they have done, but did express concerns with what happens when you give a raise mid-year and asked who he consulted before this was done. Mr. Diener went through the reasons why this was done and he spoke with the Town Manager and the Finance Director; frankly he was embarrassed that the Coordinator had gone that long without an increase, and wanted to rectify it as quickly as possible as that was the appropriate thing to do. There was an additional discussion on whether or not they will be coming in on budget. Chairman Nichols explained that his problem is more with the principle associated with the process than anything else.

Mr. Diener shared the following with the Board: Conservation Commission taking responsibility for monitoring some properties in Town; went through these properties for the Board; for the most part these properties are on conservation land; the monitoring will incur a cost; need to decide how we can best deal with this; thinks monitoring is a good idea but need to find someone to do this monitoring. There was a discussion on how much money

they are looking at and how they might want to go about funding this including trying to put it in the budget. Selectman Woolsey asked about one of the properties on the list and one that will be added.

i. Assessing (51:40)

Mr. Tinker stated that it is the same budget.

Selectman Woolsey thanked him for the work he has done on the utilities on public ways. Selectman Pierce also complimented him on the work he did on another utility.

j. Legal (53:50)

Atty. Gearreald and Assistant Atty. Robertson both present and made comments as follows: overall budget essentially flat; major change is the inclusion of a 16 hour per week clerical staff person; discussed what this position would do; possibility of putting records on disk; lack of storage space; recognize they are low on clerical staff; hourly rate would be \$16 per hour; no other benefits except paying FICA; nine month rate compared to an annual basis; minor increase in supplies which he explained in detail; went through some of the amounts that changed for outside counsel; this budget is lower than any of the years since 2004.

Selectman Woolsey made comments as follows: the tangle of cases just in regards to utilities; happy to see Assistant Atty. Robertson getting more involved in case hearings.

Selectman Bean thanked them for coming forward looking for clerical help.

Selectman Pierce made comments as follows: talked about the part-time employee last year; understands the need for this; wonders if the employee may be shared with other departments such as the Town Manager's Office and this could be done.

Chairman Nichols made comments as follows: is fine with what they are looking to do with the part-time person; pointed out going forward into 2015 it would not be a flat budget; would prefer the budget be flat going forward; suggested reducing outside counsel budget by the \$3,400 to cover this position.

Selectman Pierce and Selectman Woolsey both do not agree with this nit picking and the need of reducing the budget by the \$3,400.

Selectman Bean supports Chairman Nichols thought process on this and expressed concern with the rate for outside counsel and the need for this to be scrutinized.

Chairman Nichols MOTIONED to reduce the outside counsel fees from \$45,000 to \$41,600 SECONDED by Selectman Bean.

VOTE: 2-3(Pierce, Plouffe, Woolsey-0

k. Planning Board (1:08:34)

l. Office of Planning

Mr. Steffen made comments as follows: here for Planning Board and Office of Planning; all normal budget items are the same from last year; looking to replace the printer/plan copier for the big plans; will be able to scan existing plans to files as well as the printing and copying; once items are scanned they will be much easier to access; current copier has reached its useful life span; difficult to get service and parts for this as it is no longer made, spending over \$800.00 a year.

Selectman Pierce questioned what research has been done in regards to purchasing the new printer. The new device will be shared with Building and any other departments that need it.

Chairman Nichols questioned how active this printer is used and explained the reason why he is asking this as the device in Assessing is available for copying and printing of plans and the second is the cost of inkjet versus laser printer. He also asked if the IT Department was involved in looking at the purchase of this printer. It was suggested that they use Paul and do some further research on this prior to making a purchase. Selectman Pierce also commented on the amount of ink that an inkjet uses versus laser jet.

m. Zoning Board (1:17:49)

Mr. Schwotzer commented that there is an increase in the supplies and expenses line item; this includes the advertising cost; off settled by netting the cost out with revenue.

n. Building & Code Inspection (1:18:47)

Mr. Schultz made comments as follows: pretty much flat; small increase of 1.69% in relation to contractual wage increases, assistant building inspector and full time secretary; part time secretary will be 12 months instead of 9 months; seem to be doing pretty good this year.

Selectman Woolsey commented on the following: time she spent with Kevin to help her understand the inspection process; blown away by what he showed her; and asked him to share this information with the Board which he did. Mr. Schultz discussed the following: number of permits they do each year, average 30-40 permits a week in the winter, 50-60 a week in the summer, specific number to certain times of year; types of inspections; each permit generates a folder; number of inspections that take place on certain projects, electrical, plumbing, HVAC; larger projects require at least an hour a day for inspections, every day; gave details with what happens with larger projects; talked about required field reports from various inspecting engineers and testing agencies on building materials. Selectman Woolsey thinks it is fascinating what they do during the inspection process.

Chairman Nichols asked questions and made comments as follows: budget amount about 3 years ago and revenues being very similar at the time; 2012 budget amount; additional staff added; hopes that revenues will continue to follow the pattern of at least offsetting the expenses. Mr. Schultz shared some tracking that he does in regards to revenue forecasting. Chairman Nichols questioned the time the Inspectors put in on projects compared to the amount collected for permits. There was a discussion of fees paid for permits.

Chairman Nichols asked when the last time they reviewed the cost of permit fees and this is something Mr. Schultz is working on. They discussed a timeline of November for a January 1st implementation for Mr. Schultz to come back to the Board with some proposals in regards to permit fees. They also discussed the fact that the Board is able to adjust these fees as a result of a warrant article put forward in the past.

Selectman Pierce questioned the inspections he gets back from engineers and how these contractors are licensed.

Selectman Bean asked Mr. Schultz to share his opinion on where they are at in the area of personnel and what their needs are. Mr. Schultz made comments as follows: 2 years ago they asked for an additional part-time inspector at 20 hours a week; this position is still in budget; things that have taken place in his office since this was done; how money was used

on an employee leant to him from Mr. Schwotzer; so the position was not filled last year; does have a part-time secretary position; the position of part-time inspector is in the budget so it can be filled; if he fills the need he can fill the position; but where to place the person will be an issue, as there is no space.

Selectman Bean clarified that at the time Mr. Schultz feels that they are adequately staffed at present. They discussed revenue coming in this year compared to budget once again. They also discussed the total value of properties in Town at 2 billion and his department is a net cost.

o. Welfare (1:45:10)

Mrs. Kingsley made comments as follows: a little slower; people are being matched with community resources and charitable organizations; knowing where the resources are; last few months cases have been a little more severe, and more expensive; ok with budget decrease, more in line with what she has spent in the past; but if the additional money is needed, it will be made available statutorily.

p. Board of Selectmen (1:47:44)

Mr. Schwotzer stated this is a flat budget.

Selectman Bean MOTIONED eliminated the funding and that they zero out the salary line for Selectman. Motion failed for lack of a second.

Selectman Pierce, Selectman Woolsey and Chairman Nichols all made comments that were not in favor of Selectman Bean's motion and expressed why they felt the way that they do.

Selectman Bean MOTIONED that they reduce the Selectmen Salary line by 5%. Motion failed for lack of a second.

q. Town Manager (1:51:16)

Mr. Schwotzer discussed the slight adjustment in this budget.

r. Misc. Committees (1:51:39)

Mr. Schwotzer expressed that these committees do not have any money budgeted.

s. Finance (1:52:25)

Chairman Nichols commented on the Treasurer's wage.

Chairman Nichols MOTIONED to reduce the line item for the Treasurer's salary to \$18,685 which reflects a 1% raise SECONDED by Selectman Pierce.

Discussion on motion

Selectman Woolsey is opposed to this and explained why. Selectman Pierce commented that if one does not like the salary of the elected position they do not have to run for the position. Chairman Nichols commented that this is about consistency not about the individual.

VOTE: 3-2(Plouffe, Woolsey)-0

Selectman Woolsey made comments as follows: surprised budget was presented this way; questioned if Mr. Schwotzer still plans to retire in April; does not want to see someone come

in cold turkey; wants to see funding in budget to have someone come in and learn before he retires.

Mr. Schwotzer made comments as follows: if someone is coming with a background in municipalities they really only have to learn software; can be trained in about 2 weeks.

Chairman Nichols suggested a month and the amount would be around \$8,825.

Chairman Nichols MOTIONED to add \$8,825 to regular wage account in Finance SECONDED by Selectman Woolsey.

VOTE: 5-0-0

t. Audit Services (1:57:31)

Mr. Schwotzer expressed this is the third year of a contract; money available for the potential of a single audit being performed; need to have money in case we do.

Selectman Woolsey wonders if we will ever have the audit in time to go in the Town Report as in the past and this will not happen, as the requirements have been increase exponentially.

u. Management Info Systems (1:58:25)

Mr. Schwotzer made comments as follows: adjustments made to cover the part-time position going to fulltime; discussed how the budget was set up in regards to equipment costs, five year cycle; changes in line items but total is the same; the health insurance number is updated to cover the fulltime position.

Selectman Pierce asked if we still have a rotation plan in place for equipment and had Mr. Schwotzer explain the equipment line items better for the Board. There was an additional discussion on the possibility of combining some of these line items.

v. Personnel Administration (2:02:17)

Mr. Schwotzer made comments as follows: changes made to salaries which affect totals in this area; related to social security; employee separation cost, buyback, merit pay all the same; discussed each line item in detail; there will be adjustments to some of these line items.

Chairman Nichols asked what reflects the increase in the line item for FICA and Medicare and Mr. Schwotzer explained it had to do with poor budgeting in previous years and how he is handling these line items now, and is bring it back in line. Chairman Nichols pointed out that the merit pay is in relation to non-inion personnel and has asked Mr. Schwotzer to do some calculations to make sure that this amount is accurate.

w. Government Buildings (2:08:08)

Chairman Nichols commented on the electricity line items and some opportunities that might exist for these accounts. He shared some discussions he had with Dick Desrosiers and how this can be discussed further at the Budget Committee level.

x. Municipal Insurance (2:10:10)

Mr. Schwotzer explained how he calculates the amount for this line item in the budget. He is asking that this line item be increased by \$17,400 to cover the Fire Inspector position for a total of \$2,840,900.

Selectman Woolsey asked about the life insurance line item. Mr. Schwotzer explained that the policy is equal to the employee's salary for every employee.

Chairman Nichols MOTIONED to increase the health insurance line by \$17,400 to \$2,840,900 SECONDED by Selectman Woolsey.

VOTE: 5-0-0

y. Other Services - Hydrants (2:13:24)

Mr. Schwotzer made comments as follows: last year it was budgeted with an 18.7% increase; actually came in at \$463,821 for 2013; felt there was enough in current budget to cover the WICA charge; kept it flat budget.

z. Patriotic Purposes (2:14:51)

No change.

aa. Other - Town Beautification (2:15:16)

Chairman Nichols pointed out that most of the funding comes from the Precinct budget.

bb. Municipal Debt Service (2:15:52)

Mr. Schwotzer made comments as follows: debt service is where there was a lot of change; added in principal for Fire Station and the WWTP; Church Street will not show until 2015; debt interest for Fire Station; this accounts for the majority of the changes in the budget for 2014.

Chairman Nichols made comments as follows: Fire Station principal and interest; he cannot account for the difference in the debt service. Mr. Schwotzer stated it is the addition of the WWTP.

IV. Closing Comments

V. Adjournment (2:19:04)

Selectman Pierce MOTIONED to adjourn at 9:18 PM SECONDED by Selectman Woolsey.

VOTE: 5-0-0

Chairman